HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative

Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities Cultivating Vital, High Opportunity Places



HUD SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE IN WASHINGTON STATE: Puget Sound Regional Council and Spokane Tribe of Indians

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL Growing Transit Communities

Growing Pains

Nearly 4 million people call the Central Puget Sound and Seattle metropolitan area home, living in a mix of urban and rural land-scapes. Desirability as a place to live, work, and play, however, has strained the region's affordability, resulting in home prices that have nearly doubled from 2000 to 2008, with more and more families forced to move farther from job centers in search of cheaper housing.

Although the region has adopted a long-term vision for land use, economic development, and transportation, implementation of that vision is challenged by this growing population (including an estimated 1.5 million new people by 2040), as well as the difficult task of coordinating consistent policies across more than 80 cities and towns.

Putting Jobs and Opportunity Closer to Where People Live

To address these challenges, a consortium of cities, counties, and public and nonprofit partners, led by the Puget Sound Regional Council, is using funding from HUD's Sustainable Communities Initiative to implement the <u>Growing Transit Communities</u> project.

"For our region, the types of projects funded by HUD's Sustainable Communities Initiative are critical to attract business investment and to create new jobs."

Bob Drewel, Executive Director
Puget Sound Regional Council

This initiative is putting jobs and opportunity closer to where people live by investing in key transit corridors and ensuring equitable, meaningful participation in decision-making.



Description

Growing Transit Communities is coordinating investments along regional corridors to put jobs and opportunity closer to where people live. Innovative technology and community capacity-building will ensure that all communities participate in the planning process.

Federal Grant

2010 HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant: \$4,999,700

Local Partners

A diverse consortium including the University of Washington, Impact Capital, Urban Land Institute, Forterra (formerly Cascade Land Conservancy), North Seattle Community College—and many others

Benefits

- Regional acquisition fund for transit-oriented, affordable housing development
- Over \$400,000 to community organizations to participate in planning most for the first time
- Demonstration projects with estimated benefits to local residents of over \$25 million, based on costsavings that include reduced congestion and decreased accident risks

For more information visit:

www.psrc.org/growth/growing-transit-communities www.hud.gov/sustainability



According to project manager Ben Bakkenta, "What's impressed me the most is how we're working with residents and communities in ways we never have before. This not only builds support for a shared vision, but builds the local capacity to make that vision a reality."

Putting Ideas to Work

Work is already underway on catalyst projects that demonstrate how integrated planning supports economic vitality and enhanced livability for the region and its communities. In the mid-size port city of Tacoma, for example, the initiative is attracting regional investment by developing a subarea plan and coordinating an area-wide environmental review. This not only helps prepare Tacoma for an estimated 60,000 new jobs by 2030, but provides an estimated \$5.8 million in immediate cost savings to developers, by avoiding separate project-by-project reviews.

Leveraging Sustainability Across the Region

The Puget Sound Regional Council is also creating new opportunities for local jurisdictions to access federal funding for other sustainability-related projects. In 2011, for example, five projects from Tacoma and Seattle received over \$15 million in competitive funding from HUD, in part due to a Preferred Sustainability Status (PSS) designation given to projects aligned with the *Growing Transit Communities* objectives. Successful applicants who benefited from this designation included the Tacoma -Pierce County Habitat for Humanity, which received \$165,000 under the HUD Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program, and the Seattle Housing Authority, which received \$10 million to redevelop the Yesler Terrace Neighborhood under HUD's Choice Neighborhoods program.



Photo courtesy of UW Runstad Center

Seeing is Believing

Working with the Runstad Center at the University of Washington, *Growing Transit Communities* is pioneering the future of public engagement in planning. Decision Commons is an innovative technology that allows local residents to visualize development scenarios in real-time, including the environmental, economic, and social implications for their neighborhoods. Given the potential of Decision Commons as both a visual and mobile technology, the Puget Sound Regional Council is demonstrating how this tool can bring the planning process directly to the region's diverse communities.

OTHER HUD SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES GRANTS IN WASHINGTON STATE

THURSTON COUNTY

South of the Puget Sound, the Thurston Regional Planning Council is using a \$1,500,000 Regional Planning grant to ensure regional prosperity as they manage an expected population growth of 67% by 2040. Their work includes developing a Sustainable Economic Strategy, informed by a Blue Ribbon Economic Panel that evaluated the region's economic assets and identified new opportunities to support 84,000 new jobs over the coming decades.

SEATTLE

The arrival of light rail in South Seattle in 2009 brought new opportunities for neighborhoods and businesses, but it also brought new challenges. Speculation near light rail transit stations caused property values to skyrocket, making the area increasingly unaffordable to existing residents and businesses. To address this, Seattle will use their \$2,999,257 Community Challenge grant to secure key sites for affordable housing and small businesses, and provide technical support to stabilize commercial leases and to support local business-owners.

OLYMPIA, LACEY, AND TUMWATER

The cities of Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater, located in the heart of capital of the Evergreen State, are coming together to support neighborhood revitalization along a shared transit corridor. Working closely with partners that include the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce and Washington State Department of Commerce, their \$763,962 Community Challenge grant will focus on infill and redevelopment to promote more choices in housing, employment, and transportation. This will make the corridor more attractive both to new residents and to new businesses.

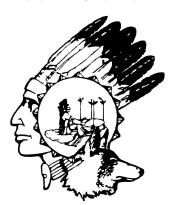


SPOKANE TRIBE OF INDIANS Sustainable Community Project

Like the Puget Sound Regional Council, the Spokane Tribe of Indians in Eastern Washington is using HUD Sustainable Communities funding to coordinate investments in housing and transportation. With a 2010 Community Challenge Grant, their efforts are focused on a smaller scale, community-level project to improve economic opportunity and enhance quality of life.

Children of the Sun

Prior to the creation of a reservation in 1881, the Spokane Tribe enjoyed a high quality of life on nearly three million acres along



the Spokane River. Today, however, the 2,700 members of the tribe, including about one-third who live on the reservation, face challenges to achieving their vision of sovereignty through self-sufficiency.

In addition to both a growing population and declining tribal revenues, the Spokane Tribe struggles with high poverty levels, limited employment opportunities, few transportation choices, and a lack of both

infrastructure and housing. These interrelated challenges require innovative solutions through comprehensive, integrated planning.

Description

The Spokane Tribe of Indians is developing the tribe's first community master plan to improve housing, transportation, and economic opportunity. They are also creating a new planning process that engages the community and brings together decision-makers from across tribal government.

Funding & Technical Assistance

FY10 HUD Community Challenge Grant: \$1,500,000 FY12 EPA Smart Growth Implementation Assistance

Local Partners

Eastern Washington University, City of Spokane, Community-Minded Enterprises

Benefits

- Improve access to employment centers and participation in regional economy
- Concentrate future development in existing areas, reducing new infrastructure costs
- Strengthen community engagement and build capacity for integrated planning
- Develop a long-term, comprehensive water infrastructure plan for sewer, waste, and drinking water.

For more information visit: www.hud.gov/sustainability

Culture, Environment, and Economy

The Spokane Tribe of Indians is using a 2010 HUD Community Challenge grant to advance cultural, environmental, and economic sustainability. By developing a Community Master Plan, the *Sustainable Community Project* is bringing together the community, government, and business leaders to assess the needs of the tribe and create integrated planning and policy solutions for housing, transportation, infrastructure, and economic development. They are also using this opportunity to strengthen tribal culture by relying on traditional knowledge for new ideas about sustainable living.

Participating in a Regional Economy

With a 47% unemployment rate on the reservation, and nearly half of those employed still falling below the poverty line, much of the *Sustainable Community Project* supports economic development and participation in the regional economy.

One strategy has been to increase transportation choices to off-reservation employment. Developing alternatives to driving, in particular, is essential for economic opportunity, according to a 2008 tribal transit feasibility survey. "The reservation is 45 miles from Spokane, and there are no transit systems that connect," says Chamisa Radford, the tribe's planning and economic development director. "If you don't have a car or your car breaks down, you lose your job."



To ensure the success of a pilot public transportation system, the Spokane Tribe is identifying and designing transit centers as part of their HUD Community Challenge grant . "We're making sure that new housing, for example, is made to incorporate public transit so our tribal members can get to job opportunities without relying on cars, which are too expensive," explains the vice-chair of Antithesis Research. "And we're getting the word out, since public transportation is new for us."

No Longer "Business as Usual"

Historically, planning decisions were made by separate tribal departments as emergency situations arose or as funding became available. "Until now, we haven't been using even basic planning tools to make good long-term decisions. Population projections, economic industry analysis, demographic analysis, and community participation have not been part of our tool box," says Radford. "We can't make smart decisions about where to invest limited resources without this kind of information."

"We actually have grant writers from different departments meeting together for the first time, so we can be more strategic about which resources to apply for and how to have a single project meet multiple needs."

—Chamisa Radford, Planning and Economic Development Director

Getting Results

This new way of doing business has already led to tangible results. With a better understanding of their water infrastructure needs, for example, the Spokane Tribe was successfully chosen to receive technical assistance through EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program in 2012. As one of only five communities selected nationwide, they will now be able to plan for and address water shortages, pipe failures, and sewer system maintenance.

Additionally, the Tribal Enterprise Board, which makes investment decisions for tribally-owned business enterprises, has agreed to focus new building where development has already occurred, saving money on costly new infrastructure. They've also embraced recommendations for green building codes that promote long-term economic and environmental benefits. "This is a crucial project that will achieve positive outcomes for the Spokane Tribe and our many communities," says Mike Spencer, Vice-Chairman for the Tribal Business Council.

Planning for the Next Generation

The Spokane Tribe is also changing how the community participates in the planning process. "By going out to events like Community Day," says Radford, "we get several hundred people to share their ideas about the community's future, instead of just a handful that used to come to planning meetings."

Through their HUD Community Challenge grant, they're also engaging the younger members of the Tribe. *Youth for a Sustainable Future*, for example, engages tribal youth to go door-to-door to survey community members and talk about sustainability. According to Radford, "Sometimes people are more open to ideas that they know are important to their children. It's also a great opportunity to develop the next generation of tribal leaders."

Engaging youth and bringing the planning process to tribal events has expanded and transformed community participation.

